

Renting a House Checklist

By Nicole Nichols-West

- Rental interior**
 - Size** Don't just go by square footage - the number of rooms and their size is important.
 - Bedrooms/bathrooms** The more baths a household has, the better - especially for large families.
 - Floors** You could be held liable for replacing damaged or stained floors after you move in, so look for durability and neutral colors.
 - Air conditioning/heating** Make sure that some form of ventilation exists unless you live in a very moderate climate. Ask if a specialist has inspected any central units recently.
- Rental exterior**
 - Lawn/yard/flowerbeds.** Will you be responsible for upkeep, or will the landlord?
 - Fencing** Is any existing in good condition? If you will need to enclose a pet or have a safe place for children to play, make sure the fence is sturdy.
 - Watering system.** If you would be responsible for lawn landscaping upkeep, is there an installed sprinkler system to streamline the job?
 - Pool** Has the pool been properly maintained, and is it safe? Again, find out who is responsible for upkeep, you or the owner.
 - Security** Is a security system installed and active? If not, ask about options.
- Rental location**
 - Schools** Check to see if the school district is ranked highly if you have children. If you are attending university, you may want to live near campus.
 - Doctors/hospitals** It's always good to live close to quality medical care facilities.
 - Emergency services** The rental should be clearly marked with the house number, so it can be found by emergency services in a crisis.
 - Houses of worship** You may want easy access to a church, mosque, synagogue, temple or other place of worship.
 - Markets/shopping centers** Don't forget the need to be able to go shopping, eat out or order in, have dry cleaning done, haircuts received, and banking accomplished.
 - Garage/parking** You will need to know the rules concerning parking and ensure there is room for your vehicle(s).
 - Public transport** Is there a bus stop nearby? Can you catch a cab or take the subway? If you don't have a car, these are prime considerations.
 - Distance from work** If you want a short trip to work and back, you have to take into account the length of your commute plus traffic conditions.
 - Pet friendly** If you have a pet, you will need to ensure you are in compliance not only with the terms of your lease but with local ordinances as well.
- Expenses**

- Rent** Can you afford it? You may also be asked for a deposit and first month in advance.
- Utilities** Connection fees, new service, and even physical visits may be necessary to get your electric, gas, water, phone, cable or internet hooked up.
- Moving** Can you move yourself, or do you need to hire a moving company? These costs will need to be factored in.
- Walk through**
 - Interior of house** Note everything that you find amiss and write it down.
 - Exterior of house** Note anything broken, work or needing replacement.
 - Ask for time** Get at least a week to report additional problems after move in - a walk through is often rushed and won't catch everything.
 - Have it signed** Your list of possible problems should be signed and dated by both you and your landlord.